

Watchdog Fulbright Is No Longer Anxious to Bark About Diplomats

BY HENRY J. TAYLOR

Where was Sen. J. William Fulbright when President Kennedy sent poor Edmund A. Gullion as ambassador to the Congo? Sometimes Fulbright has serious lapses, like Nehru. This was another of them.

As a member and later chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the eloquent Arkansan made much hay and many headlines by crusading for excellence in a President's choice of envoys abroad. Why is he silent now?

Sen. Fulbright, interestingly enough, owed his over-all power to President Eisenhower.

The Republican President could do little in foreign affairs involving the Senate without the OK of this key Democrat. Fulbright had to be heavily consulted and, in fact, pampered. He could, and did, hurl thunderbolts at the President's policies, appointments, etc.

It stamped him as a warrior and, scared the State Department. "Be right with Fulbright" was the tip for departmental promotions and other gains.

Fulbright hurled himself upward. Accordingly, Mr. Kennedy's election was a personal catastrophe for him. His party won. A Democrat entered the White House who, in the ironic way politics does the twist, need only nod "good morning" to this chairman if he chose, and let it go at that. No nonsense permitted. Atropos was ready with her shears.

The result was prompt, although Fulbright still gurgles occasionally like the last breath of Vulcan.

In his highly publicized crusades demanding fine ambassadors abroad, his melody was foolproof. It allowed him to be both right and righteous at the same time. Approved from heaven for most orators and all politicians.

For a man who had been a member of the Senate for 10 years, Fulbright was nominated only for the position of ambassador to the Congo. A man of large affairs and proven judgment — Ambury Houghton — to be ambassador to France. Fulbright could only see that Houghton

did not speak French. He stumbled in the appointment, his finger wagging in dire warning that America must do better than this. (America has never done better than this in many a year, and Houghton was a splendid success in France.)

However, when President Kennedy lost all touch with reality and nominated Gen. James Gavin as Houghton's successor, and to us dispatched a general — and a man of only military experience — to a country where De Gaulle is notorious for an almost pathological contempt for generals, Fulbright's sat like a Moloch, who has been described as silent in several languages.

And this has been the Fulbright performance ever since his personal self-interest has been involved and it became more profitable politics for him to take a deep sleep on this important subject.

Yet, the Senate's responsibility to confirm or reject each ambassadorial nomination remains. Chairman Fulbright's responsibility

is to choose the best man for the job. He has failed. He has failed in every sense. There is a total lack of vision and leadership in the State Department. As there was when Nehru went into Goa. It is appalling that the President and Secretary of State have appointed poor Gullion to the Congo to supply, on the spot, judgment and action in this immediate political, military and economic crisis of such profound consequence. Gullion is completely without experience in large affairs of any kind whatever. He is a long-time server in the bow innards of the State Department.

Where were the flashes of Fulbright fire? There were none. The warrior went out for input and he is silent. And still, this time is not awakening to his self-advised duties and for Gullion's transfer elsewhere? Either Fulbright is so fat what he said so forcefully for so many years or he is merely Nehru and Goa after all — the tragic gulf between an eloquent man's words and his deeds.

STATINTL